

August 21, 2011
Sermon for The Tenth Sunday After Pentecost
St Peter Lutheran Church
Bowie, TX
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Romans 11:33-12:8

Romans 11:33-12:8 (ESV)

³³ Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! ³⁴ “For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?” ³⁵ “Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?” ³⁶ For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.

¹ I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. ² Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. ³ For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. ⁴ For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, ⁵ so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. ⁶ Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; ⁷ if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; ⁸ the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.

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¹ *The Holy Bible : English Standard Version.* Wheaton : Standard Bible Society, 2001

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!

Amen.

So often in today's world, we want to put a measure on things. We praise the biggest and the best, sometimes looking down on the normal or under size. If a gardener grows a big pumpkin and his neighbor grows a bigger one, the praise will go to the larger one. We measure a businessman by the worth of his company, but the standards change, going along with popular culture. At one time a large family was the measure of normalcy and even success, now a days, a smaller family is preferred and someone with 6 or 7 children is looked upon as different and not the preferred measure of society.

Although times change, we still measure things...sometimes we even go so far as to measure God. Trying to decide if He measures up to our society's standards. Sometimes we want to whittle God down to our size, to meet our standard of measurement. Let's just dress God up in our 21st Century clothes, trying to make Him think like we do...hold the same opinions and values that we have come to hold.

You know, He should really be more broad minded. After all, it is the 21st Century, His rule Book was finished over 2,000 years ago and is really much older than that. How can we be expected to follow some outdated guidelines that were set at the beginning of the world. I mean, come on, times have changed, God should really change also.

What is the big deal about pre-marital sex, infidelity, divorce, abortion, homosexuality, and all of the other things that our society deems ok?

We simply want God to solve the worlds problems and then to leave us alone when it comes to our personal lives, cause really, we gave our time on Sunday...leave us alone during the rest of the week, we know what we are doing.

It's as if we are saying, OK God, why are you letting us suffer wars and natural disasters? Injustice and cruelty should be banned...It's like God just isn't doing His job!

What we seem to have forgotten is that all of the worlds problems are a direct result of sin, our very sins that started back with Adam and Eve have compounded over the years so that the state of the world has become a direct result. God's law does not bring us pain but it is our denial and disobedience that results in our suffering. Think about it, look back over your lives and compare...trying to live a Godly life and sometimes failing. When did the trouble arrive? If you are honest with yourselves, you can find a direct route from disobedience to problems and even in the case of some peoples lives, death. Exactly as we are told earlier in Romans 6:23 "For the wages of sin is death,..."

But God doesn't leave us there, in our sin, just waiting for death, not merely physical, but eternal! No, going back to the opening of our text, we read:

"Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!"

It is through God's un-searchable wisdom, though His perfect knowledge, wisdom, and power that He brings us to Himself. He knows who we really are ...He knows our need for salvation and His compassion is on us, totally and freely given. Nothing is held back out of His Love for us!

Yes, Romans 6:23 reads: *"For the wages of sin is death,"* but it doesn't stop there, Paul goes on saying: *"but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."*

In His boundless wisdom, God has chosen to give us His only Son, because it was the only way that we could be saved...in spite of ourselves... ..God gave us the very key to our salvation. Not in the form of a self-help program, but through His very innocent Son as Jesus became sin for us, so that we might be saved.

It is through faith in Christ alone that we are saved, through His precious blood, given and shed for you, that God no longer sees us as disobedient sinners. God sees us differently through Christ. We are now His children, washed clean in the blood of Christ at our Baptism, forgiven as we receive the Christ's very Body and Blood in Holy Communion.

Paul tells us in Romans 11:32: *For God has consigned all to disobedience, that he may have mercy on all.*

To mankind, this might sound like a backwards way to save people, but God uses Paul's pen to bid us not to question God's wisdom and not to second guess Him. Instead we are to adore it and praise it for it's great and unfathomable wisdom. Are we given all of the answers?

No. As I've mentioned before, the human brain is roughly 3 ½ pounds. It is impossible for that amount of imperfect matter to try and figure out the immensity, the perfection of God is impossible. There are just too many things in this universe that we simply cannot understand. It is then that we should trust Him.

In the closing line of Chapter 11, Paul tells us: *“For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.”*

In Greek, the original language of the New Testament, the word the Paul uses for “all things” is “τὰ πάντα” which is really all inclusive, because it literally means “the universe”.

All of the universe, everything is under His control. How can we really second guess or even challenge the perfect wisdom of God who planned and accomplished our salvation and gives us continued victories over satan?

We cannot understand all God does, but we can, **by grace**, believe and confess what He has revealed about our salvation in Jesus Christ.

Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Amen.